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Agenda Item 12.4
Dec. 7, 2004

Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor
City Council members

From: Vice Mayor Pat Dando

Subject: McKean Road
Youth Sports Complex

Date: December 3, 2004

Approved: *Pat Dando*

RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve the Planning staff report to certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and approve the General Plan Amendment.
2. Approve the recommendations of both staff reports regarding appropriations of funds and authorizing the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Almaden Youth Association (AYA).
3. Direct staff to begin discussions with AYA, San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) and the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) for the first phase of the project.
4. Direct staff to transfer \$500,000 from District Ten Parks and Acquisition Fund to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services for design, construction management, roadway and frontage improvements.

BACKGROUND

Over the past 20 years, residents of the Almaden and Blossom Valleys have experienced a deficiency in youth sports fields. For the past 12 years, District 10 councilmembers have worked to identify land to accommodate local youth soccer, softball, and little leagues. Available land in South San Jose is almost nonexistent and if available, the cost is exorbitant. This dilemma led to the exploration of the 77 acres of land owned by SJUSD on McKean Road.

Several facts have convinced me that this site is the prudent place to build a youth sports field. First, the land has already been paid for with our tax dollars. SJUSD bought the land 30 years ago for a future school site in preparation for the growing number of children that would move into the area. Second, a school, with sports fields, will most likely be built on the property in the future. Third, SJUSD, under the leadership of Board member Gary Rummelhoff, former Superintendent Linda Murray, and current Superintendent Don Iglesias have agreed to lease portions of the property to the City of San Jose for \$1 a year as reflected in the current MOU. Finally, because of the long-standing policy that encourages and fosters partnerships with SJUSD and the SCVWD, to utilize publicly owned land for recreation use, it is appropriate that we work together to develop this site for our children to play sports.

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This project has been a collaborative effort with representatives from city departments and outside agencies. Many meetings have taken place over the past three years that have included the City Manager and City Attorneys Office as well of the Departments of Planning, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Transportation, and my office. In addition, the SCVWD, SJUSD and the AYA have also participated. This project has had consistent oversight for the past three years.

In 2002 the City and AYA began the environmental review process for this project. At that time, the City conducted an initial study as required by the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA). The completion of the CEQA report initiated an EIR for the project. The EIR was completed in July of last year. The City moved to prepare a more comprehensive EIR in January of 2004 to address concerns from the immediate neighbors. Water availability and traffic along McKean Road were of primary concern.

The water study indicated that conservatively up to 5 acres could be developed with natural turf. The availability of water for residents is not expected to change. However, the project will continue to be monitored by water meters. The remainder of the project may be developed with drought resistant landscaping and artificial turf. In times of drought, as with all other city facilities of this type, water would not be used at the expense of residents.

In addition, the AYA will encourage parents to drive or carpool their children (as is the current practice) to the youth fields on McKean Road. Currently the AYA monitors traffic and parking in residential areas where games and practices take place. The safety of children has always been and will continue to be a priority for AYA.

I recommend that phase one of this project contemplate the development of up to 20 acres. The estimated cost of this phase is approximately 5.2 million. To provide the initial funding to begin the project I recommend transferring an additional \$500,000 from the District 10 Parks and Acquisition Fund to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services. This money will cover design, construction management, and roadway and frontage improvements for the project. The AYA will continue to actively fundraise in order to leverage limited city dollars with private contributions. These funds will cover the actual construction of the project, including natural turf, artificial turf, and drought resistant landscaping.

As a vibrant city, San Jose needs to provide and continue to upgrade amenities for its growing population, especially it's youth. In order to meet this need we must take advantage of this opportunity in continuing our partnership with the AYA, SJUSD, and the SCVWD to address the shortage of playing fields. There is a common belief shared by many that these sports fields will provide a place where children can come together to learn teamwork, a strong work ethic, and make memories that will last a lifetime.